

# Napoleon Bonaparte

a French soldier, hero, and self proclaimed king

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# SPOILER ALERT !!

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This presentation is about  
a historical, military, and government figure.

It contains one hundred percent pure

*HISTORY*



Before I start, this is a spoiler alert.

Napoleon is a significant historical figure in both military and government.

CLICK - as such this is going to be a very intense presentation that contains a lot of history.

# Italian Heritage

- ✦ August 15, 1769: born in Ajaccio, Corsica
- ✦ Corsica was sold to France in 1768
- ✦ Corsicans against the sale of their Italian heritage to French
- ✦ family name was originally di Buonaparte



***"I was born, when my country was perishing. Thirty thousand Frenchmen were vomited upon our soil. Cries of the wounded, sighs of the oppressed, and tears of despair surrounded my cradle at my birth."***

**Napoleon**

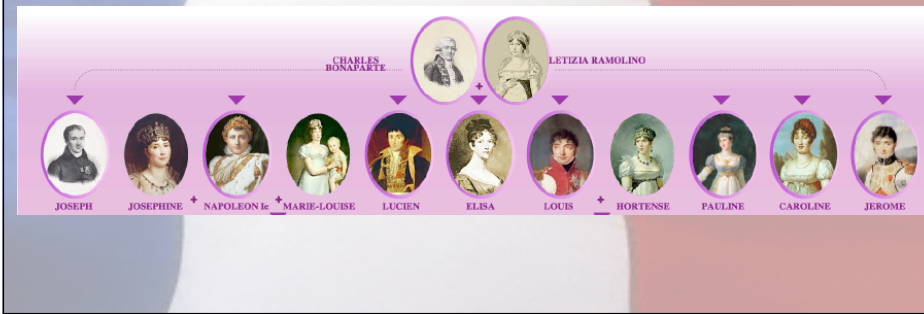
Napoleon was born on August 15, 1769 in Ajaccio, Corsica. Corsica is an island located off the west coast of Italy. The year before he was born, Genoa sold the island of Corsica to France. The Corsicans considered themselves Genoese and were very much against the sale of their island. As he grew up, Napoleon did not like France - he thought of himself as Corsican.

CLICK A quote from him in reference to this change in ownership of the island is: "I was born, when my country was perishing. Thirty thousand Frenchmen were vomited upon our soil. Cries of the wounded, sighs of the oppressed, and tears of despair surrounded my cradle at my birth."

Napoleon Bonaparte's name originally reflected his Corsican heritage and was spelled differently. Napoleon changed it much later after he adopted the French ways.

# Family Tree

- ✦ 2nd son in a family of 8
- ✦ very minor nobility with no privilege, father was Corsican representative to court of for King Louis XVI



Napoleon was the 2nd son in a family of 8 children who lived into adulthood. The family was very minor Italian nobility with essentially no privileges. His father studied law and the closest he got to being an aristocrat was to be a Corsican representative to the French court of King Louis XVI. Napoleon was most influenced by his mother and her strict discipline but it was his father that believed in the best education.

## Early years

- ✦ in 1779 at age 9 begins study at the royal military academy in Brienne France
- ✦ 1784: Enters the prestigious french Royal Military Academy in Paris
- ✦ 1785: Graduates from Ecole Militaire in just 1 year
- ✦ rank: second lieutenant in the artillery



as a child Napoleon took his studies very seriously. He read a lot especially history and he did well at mathematics. It is interesting that he also had a fiery nature and was prone to fighting and was successful in beating other children who were older and bigger than him.

at 9 years old Napoleon was sent to the royal military academy in northern France. Napoleon had many difficulties there:

He spoke French with a thick Corsican accent

The northern climate was much colder and harsher

he did not see family for 5 years

and he did not fit in and did not have many friends. He was laughed at by other students due to his french speech and his poor social status.

He begged to come home but he wasn't allowed so he worked hard and ignored the other kids.

Five years later he was chosen to attend the prestigious french Royal Military Academy in Paris called Ecole Militaire. Things didn't go much better for Napoleon there either so he continued to study and work hard.

He impressed his teachers and was able to pass the tests and graduate the Academy in just one year instead of two. When he graduated in 1785 Napoleon left the school with the rank of second lieutenant in the artillery

## Learning Artillery 1785 - 1789

- ✦ At sixteen, first Corsican artillery officer
- ✦ began military training with the best artillery unit in the French army, La fere
- ✦ became top-notch artillery officer who was able to operate all parts of the cannon
- ✦ studied military battles & strategies
- ✦ expectations of an average career in military



At sixteen, Napoleon was the youngest French military officer as well as the first Corsican artillery officer

He began his specific military training with the best artillery unit in the French army, La fere in southern France. He continued to dedicate himself to the military. He became a top-notch artillery man and His love of mathematics served him well in calculating trajectories, weight of shot, and amount of powder. He constantly studied the way military worked by reading about strategies, battles, and great military heroes like Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great.

Although he was good, His career expectations were pretty average because appointments in the military at that time did not necessarily go to men of skill. They went to men of nobility and aristocracy.



## French Revolution 1789 - 1792



- ✦ did not directly take part in the French Revolution
- ✦ but greatly influenced him
- ✦ was present in Aug 1792 and saw storming of Tuileries Palace and massacre of Swiss guard
- ✦ guillotining of aristocrats opened up military positions for Napoleon to advance

But the French Revolution that started in 1789 would change those career expectations.

Even though he was in the military, Napoleon did not actually take part in the French revolution on either side. As part of the military, he was not called into service to protect the royalists and he did not protest with the republicans because he didn't really think of himself as French yet. He really just observed the Revolution.

Napoleon was in Paris in August of 1792 when a French mob stormed the Tuileries Palace where King Louis the XVI was being held under house arrest. The mob massacred the Swiss guard who were on duty and the King and his family escaped.

Before the Revolution, over ninety percent of the officers in the French army were aristocrats or nobility. However the revolution saw the removal of many heads including the aristocratic officers in the military. By the time Napoleon was to take command of his unit, only three percent of the officers in the military were aristocrats.

## Back and Forth to Corsica

- ✦ returned to corsica for long periods
- ✦ was welcomed as a hero
- ✦ wrote a history of Corsica
- ✦ tried to get into corsican politics
- ✦ June 1793 di Buonapartes forced to leave Corsica
- ✦ The Bonapartes arrive in France



Besides not feeling that he was truly French, one of the reasons Napoleon did not participate in the French Revolution was because he was spending long periods of time in Corsica. His father had died and Napoleon felt a strong sense of duty to his family. He bounced back and forth between being in the military and being in Corsica.

Corsica welcomed him as a hero. Besides getting the family estate up and running again, Napoleon tried his hand at writing a history of Corsica which did not sell very well. He also tried to enter Corsican politics but that also went very poorly. After a quarrel with mayor Paoli and being as a royalist due to his father's ties with the Court of France, the Bonapartes were given the boot and banished from Corsica. At just 24 years old Napoleon was banned from the land of his birth. Due to this banishment, Napoleon finally starts to think of himself as French not Corsican. The family name is changed from di Buonaparte to Bonaparte to look and sound more French.



# Making a Name for Himself

- ✦ Battle of Toulon  
Sept - Dec 1793
- ✦ was Major of Artillery  
for the French  
Republic
- ✦ came up with good  
battle plan to set up  
the guns and defend  
the harbor
- ✦ plan succeeds - British  
ships defeated
- ✦ promoted to the rank  
of Brigadier General.



*"I have no words to describe Bonaparte's merit: much technical skill, an equal degree of intelligence, and too much gallantry..."*  
—General Jacques François Dugommier

Napoleon first saw military action in the Battle of Toulon in 1793. This battle was part of the French Rev war battles where the French republic fought against French royalists who had support from Great Britain. Napoleon was a Major of Artillery for the army of the French Republic.

Napoleon came up with a good battle plan by comparing the Harbor of Toulon with the harbor of his home town Ajaccio that allowed for a good defense of the harbor. His plan was a success and the French Republic won the battle of Toulon.

CLICK He received a lot of praise and credit. At the age of just 24, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General.

## “whiff of grapeshot” Oct 1795

- ✦ royalists declared a rebellion against The Directory at Tuileries Palace
- ✦ Napoleon recommended to take control of forces and defend the Convention
- ✦ used large canons to repel the attackers - 1,400 royalists died and the rest fled.
- ✦ historians describe this as clearing the streets with just a “whiff of grapeshot”
- ✦ promoted to Commander of the Interior and given command of the Army of Italy



the new French government was called The Directory and was meeting at the Tuileries Palace for the National Convention. royalists declared a rebellion against the Directory and a mob and an uprising was expected. Napoleon just happened to be in Paris at the time and it was recommended that he take control of army forces that had been thrown together to defend the Convention. This was based on his performance in Toulon. Napoleon had witnessed the massacre at Tuileries 3 years before and he surely wasn't going to let it happen again under his command.

He used large canons to repel the attackers and even though Napoleon's forces were outnumbered by 6 to 1, the royalist insurrection was put down and the French Republic was victorious. 1,400 royalists died and the rest of the mob fled.

historians describe Napoleon's tactic of using large cannons against a mob of people as clearing the streets with just a “whiff of grapeshot”

His success again earned him a promotion. At only 26 years old, Napoleon was Commander of the Interior and given command of the Army of Italy

## Falls in Love - 1795-96



- ✦ October 1795: Napoleon meets Josephine
  - ✦ married before
  - ✦ had children
  - ✦ husband guillotined
  - ✦ she was nearly guillotined
- ✦ March 1796: Napoleon and Josephine get married
- ✦ Napoleon is enamoured with Josephine even refers to her in letters as his guiding star

In 1795 Napoleon met the love of his life, Josephine de Beauharnais. Josephine had been married before and had 2 children but her husband had been guillotined in the Great Terror. Josephine was nearly guillotined too but Maximillien Robespierre was guillotined one day before her scheduled beheading and Robespierre's beheading ended the Reign of Terror and Josephine was released.

Napoleon was head over heels in love with Josephine although Josephine did not feel as strongly because she had been a mistress for several men after her husband's death. Napoleon often referred to Josephine as his guiding star. Napoleon and Josephine were married just 5 months after they met.

## Success in Italy 1796 - 1797



- ✦ two days after being married Napoleon leaves for the Italian Campaign
- ✦ seems unstoppable as he has victory after victory
- ✦ refused to dethrone the pope
- ✦ but looted Venice and other Italian cities
- ✦ marched instead into Austria and defeated 4 armies larger than his own
- ✦ demanded peace
- ✦ December 1797 Napoleon returns to Paris a hero.

just two days after his marriage to Josephine, Napoleon leaves for the Italian Campaign

In Italy, he had victory after victory in battle and seemed unstoppable. He makes great progress for the French Republic. However, he disobeyed orders to dethrone the pope. Instead he takes his army northward into Austria and continues the battles on a new front. Even though he goes against 4 armies larger than his own, he has great success and eventually Austria demands peace. His success in this campaign was due to his ability to conceal his troops, the use of espionage, and making artillery units mobile to support the infantry.

While he was in Italy he looted Venice and other cities and took much treasure and many masterpieces such as the horses of St Mark and sent them back to Paris. They started forming a magnificent collection that would later become the Louvre.

In December 1797, Napoleon returns to Paris a true hero.





In his next military command, Napoleon was told to defeat great Britain. He realizes the strength of the British navy and devises the strategy to capture Egypt and indirectly harm Great Britain. The plan was to hurt British trade by undermining their access to India. It would also improve French trade, and conquer a land filled with riches.

In 1798 Napoleon sets out for Egypt and quickly captured many cities and his plan seems to be going well.

CLICK However, the British Navy led by Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson is able to sneak behind the French fleet and attack the French from two sides in what is called the Battle of the Nile. The French fleet is destroyed and Napoleon is stranded in Egypt. This victory for Britain ended Napoleon's chances of ever taking all of Egypt even though he spent another year there trying to regain territory.

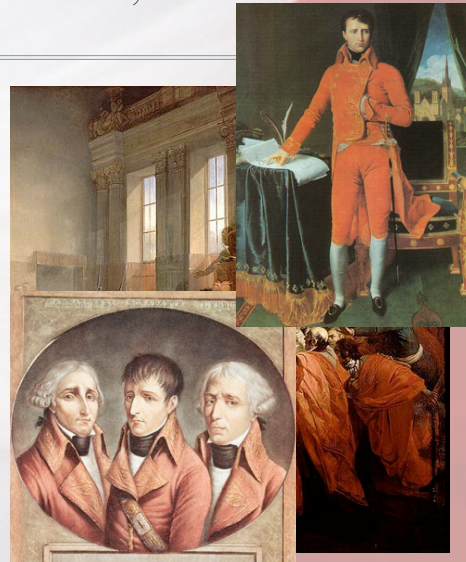
Napoleon finally leaves Egypt in 1799 however he exits the area and leaves most of his troops there. He hurries back to Paris ahead of the news of his failure in Egypt. Militarily, the Egyptian campaign was a failure. However, Napoleon had brought many scientists with him to study Egypt. Their work was a brilliant success. They made discoveries such as the Rosetta Stone and created the field of Egyptology which continues to fascinate people. Through the use of clever propaganda, Napoleon was able to make it seem to the French that he was successful in Egypt and that he had increased France's territory even though he really didn't.

CLICK Now there is something interesting that needs to be noted in the painting of Lord Nelson. His hand is tucked into his jacket in the same manner that is always associated with Napoleon. CLICK He was in no way trying to copy Napoleon. Even though we associate the hand in the jacket to be a symbol of Napoleon, it is a very masculine stance that was popular by painters of the day.



## coup d'état - Nov 9-10, 1799

- ✦ popularity was incredibly high
- ✦ The Directory was ineffective and corrupt
- ✦ Napoleon, Sièyes, and Ducos overthrew The Directory
- ✦ Napoleon maneuvers control from Sièyes and becomes First Consul
- ✦ Sièyes and Ducos become becoming Second, and Third Consul
- ✦ Napoleon is the most powerful person in all of France



Napoleon's popularity was incredibly high after his Egyptian campaign. He was viewed as having again been victorious instead of being defeated.

When he returns to Paris he finds that the new government, the Directory is ineffective and corrupt. It is perfect timing to be overthrown but they need a pivotal person and a real leader. Napoleon is perfect to be the figurehead of the coup. The leaders of the coup are Emmanuel Sieyès, Roger Ducos, Napoleon, and his brother Lucien Bonaparte. Sièyes is expected to dominate but Napoleon takes control and seizes the power for himself by putting forth the new constitution. He even recommends himself as First Consul.

CLICK Viewed as more than a figurehead, Napoleon is chosen to lead the new government. Napoleon is the most powerful person in all of France. Sièyes and Ducos become the Second and Third Consuls.